

NY Times 17 July 68
Wash. Post 19 July 68

SCALE

Communist Sources Say China Has 1st ICBM

MOSCOW, June 30 (AP)—Communist sources said today they have learned that Communist China has developed its first intercontinental ballistic missile, broadening a nuclear capability that Peking says includes a hydrogen bomb.

The report, which was unofficial and could not be confirmed, came from usually well-informed foreign Communists in Moscow. They declined to elaborate on where

they obtained their information.

The sources said it was their understanding that the missile has not been tested but that its construction had been completed in the last few days. The missile was described as ready for trial.

The breakthrough, if true, would make China the world's third ICBM nation after the United States and the Soviet Union. Its nuclear progress is

charted in a series of seven nuclear blasts since October, 1964, culminating in what was described by the Chinese as a hydrogen-bomb test June 17, 1967.

The Chinese first claimed to have succeeded "in producing guided nuclear weapons" in December, 1966. A month later Robert S. McNamara, then U.S. Secretary of Defense, told Congress that the Chinese were not expected to have a

"significant number" of ocean-spanning ICBMs until the mid-1970s. But in September of the same year he said China would have full-range ICBMs in the "early 1970s" and would have medium-range ballistic missiles "within a year."